

Feminism: Concepts and Theories
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Introduction to Queer Theory – I

Feminism Concepts and Theories, welcome to week 11, which is technically the last of your weeks where you have to peruse new content. As you well know, week 12 is when we wrap up and get you to learnings and conclusions. So, today we are going to go over a set of remarkably interesting, fun, radical things. So I for one, I am going to have fun. I am going to be able to bring you multiple theoretical ruminations on gender at large, but also take you into realms where you might not see a recognizable continuity between feminist theory, and the things that I am talking about.

So, I will try my best to make sense; but also, in many ways have fun with this week's lecture. Think about the places that it can take you, about the ways in which it can push the boundaries of your own thinking vis-à-vis gender, and also, in many ways locate you in a remarkably fantastically fun world, where different sets of people are performing different theoretical inversions and possibilities in relation to gender.

Without further ado, in today's lecture we are speaking about Queer theory, we are speaking about post-structuralism, and we are speaking about the boundaries of gender itself, something that I began by asking: as to if gender is a boundaried construct, and if there are ways in which we could think beyond such limits?

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DECONSTRUCTING DUALISM

- A dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable.
- culture/nature, reason/ nature, male/female, mind/body, reason/emotion, reason/matter, public/ private, subject/object and self/other

The slide features a presenter, a woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a blue sleeveless top and a necklace, standing on the right side. The background is a light beige color with a dark wavy shape on the left and a green vertical bar on the right. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.

So, let us start maybe by taking you back to something that we established at the beginning of this series of lectures, which is the question of a dualism. And by now this should be very, very easy for you to comprehend, so let us try this again. “A dualism is an intense, established, and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities, so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable.”

We drew this terrain of dualisms in such a fashion, in order to impress upon you the idea that dualisms make it near impossible to think about equality and mutuality thinkable. You cannot be equal and co-exist; it is as if hierarchy is built into the structure of dualism itself. We also went over examples, culture-nature, reason-nature, male-female, mind-body, reason-emotion, reason-matter, public-private, subject-object, self and other.

And not only did we go over these as examples of dualisms, we also encouraged you to look at what counts as masculine, what counts as feminine. How is it that binary thinking in relation to gender comes established in the world as an agglomeration of dualities; as things that come at you again and again, until you are not able to think of the world outside of this binary. And so today, before I ask you to push that form of thinking, it might make sense to go over the other part of that duality, which until now we have left untouched. To think about something that has taken route in a different branch of studies called masculinity studies in recent times.

And perhaps focus a little bit of attention on masculinity itself as the under theorized part of this duality. As you well know, feminist theory has been working with the question of woman, question of bodies in relation to womanhood for a very long time now. So, much as we have made great strides and thinking about women, thinking about men is much less encouraged; mainly because in many ways feminist theory makes it almost obvious, to say that the male is the more powerful part of the hierarchy.

However, in recent times theorists have been pushing for us to try and understand masculinity as much as femininity as constructed through culture in very particular ways. And many have argued that much as masculinity appears powerful, it also depends upon similar constructions of power to make one kind of masculine hegemonic at the cost of different kinds of maleness in male bodies that gets subsumed within this definition. In other words, masculinity as much as femininity is constructed through internal power relations that are also intersectional. Race, caste, class, and gender for men as much as women; for masculinity as much as femininity.

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MASCULINITY AND FEMINIST THOUGHT

- One stream of thought
 - Masculinity = the institutional practices, attitudes, and personality traits of men—like aggression and competitiveness—that uphold male dominance and oppress women.
- An alternate formulation
 - It is a slippery entity without consistent content. Some feminists think it can be restructured so that it does not depend on male dominance over women.

And therefore, let us look at what such a stream of thought suggests about masculinity. Masculinity, perfunctorily for the purposes of just discussions at this point of time, we can define as the institutional practices, attitudes, and personality traits attached to men. Aggression, competitiveness, and these are not just perfunctory, they are not meant to be necessarily natural, they also have a function; they uphold male dominance that ends up oppressing women. In other

words, masculinity is necessary in order to preserve the hierarchies between men and women; and such masculinity then appears preordained. Men are naturally aggressive; men are naturally competitive.

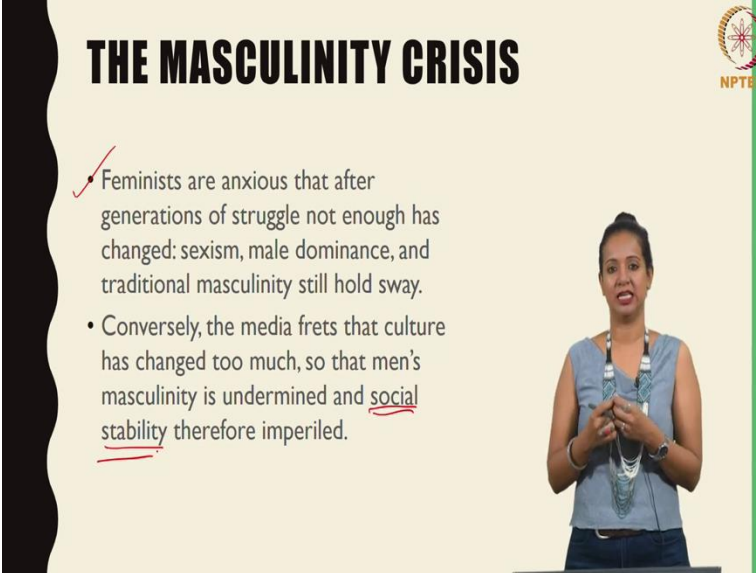
And it seems biological in some arguments but the cultural argument says that these are a) institutional practices. And you will remember from our discussions, what we mean by institutions: institutions like family, like state, like nation state, various bodies of knowledge? They reinforce the idea that masculinity includes things like aggression, competitiveness, and these kinds of seemingly biological instincts. However, in masculinity studies one of the alternate streams of thought being proposed are that “it is a slippery entity,” it is actually defined by many, many things and these things are not consistent.

Some feminists think, it can be restructured so that it does not depend on male dominance over women; and such a restructuring then would also allow us to play with the idea that it is slippery. If it is slippery, then it can be restructured and new content can be inserted. So, here there is not the kind of talk that says, female like men but instead saying masculinity itself can be different things; it need not look the way it does today. Much like the way it looks today, does not look like what it did say, a couple of centuries ago. So, if we are able to deconstruct the idea of masculinity itself, it gives us space to be able to reconstruct it differently.

bell hooks, in the text that we read in our first week, *Everybody must be Feminists* speaks about feminist masculinity. This ought not to be read as men behaving like women. But in fact, asking for masculinity also to adhere to principles of the feminist movements for egalitarianism, for a nonsexist society, for a society in which everybody has worth, in spite, despite, inclusive of all kinds of gender formulations.



Therefore, think about masculinity studies itself as offering similar kinds of possibilities as feminist theory. In other words, the object proper of both these streams of thought ought to be gender; whether attached to male-identified or female-identified bodies.

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THE MASCULINITY CRISIS

- Feminists are anxious that after generations of struggle not enough has changed: sexism, male dominance, and traditional masculinity still hold sway.
- Conversely, the media frets that culture has changed too much, so that men's masculinity is undermined and social stability therefore imperiled.



Masculinity studies also looks at cultural content, such as the masculinity crisis. And this is something that keeps coming up in popular culture these days; that men are in the midst of a crisis. There is a masculinity crisis because thanks to the feminist movement, or thanks to those angry feminists, men are not allowed to be men anymore. Think in our last lecture about the consent video; where the protagonists are speaking about clear communication, about clear consent.

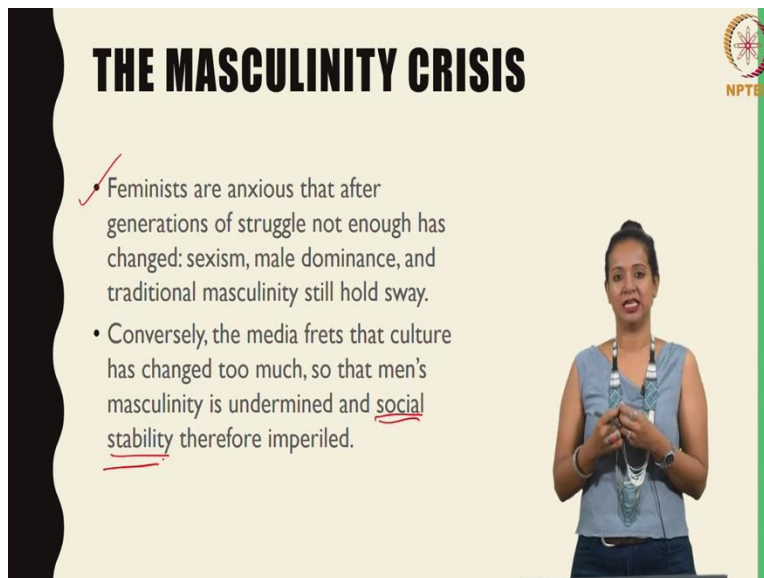
And the backlash from a number of people spouting seemingly commonsensical logic is that well, these are complex things. How is it that we are able to systematize, how when a man approaches a woman there is communication that is not clear. Should we sign a form, should we have check boxes, why are you taking the joy all out of it? And in response to which many feminists have written, texts such as *kill joy feminism*. That feminism that kills particular kinds of joy that we take for granted, that are dependent upon dominance of men.

Here the masculinity crisis captures precisely this refusal for people to look at masculinity; captures precisely this refusal of people to look at masculinity itself as a gendered construct; that there is no question of natural men and constructed women. In fact, all of these are constructed. And you can follow multiple debates around the masculinity crisis, especially in relation to the rise of a whole new breed of consultants, philosophers, advisors, who are making their money on telling men how to be men. Take responsibility, be strong, take care of your family.

Seemingly, not bad at all, it is good thing to teach people how to be responsible. But the problem is that then they reinforce the idea that there is a natural essence of manhood. Women should also be taking responsibility, women should also be strong, women should also be able to take care of people around them. And this is not specific to men, women, any of these categories of gender, to which they become attached as naturalized forms of personality or identity. Therefore, perhaps the masculinity crisis can be understood thus: “Feminists are anxious that after generations of struggle not enough has changed: sexism, male dominance, traditional masculinity still hold sway.” And you can see this in the rise of fourth wave feminism. Fourth wave feminists are having to repeat a lot of things or having to address things that were addressed also by second wavers. So, current day feminism does show signs of frustration; that this battle has been going on long enough and we are still arguing the same things. In such a scenario, the media frets that culture has changed too much, so men's masculinity is undermined and social stability imperiled.

Pay attention to social stability and social stability here is but another way of saying status quo. The way things have always been, and the investment people have and having them to continue in the same fashion. The investment people have in making sure that people are happy with their lot in life, and do not have their ambitions for the kinds of equality that must be guaranteed to everyone in modernity.

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THE MASCULINITY CRISIS

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- Conversely, the media frets that culture has changed too much, so that men's masculinity is undermined and social stability therefore imperiled.

The slide features a speaker, a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue sleeveless top and a necklace, standing in the bottom right corner. The slide has a light beige background with a dark wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.

And such a masculinity crisis then also alerts us to a false nostalgia. It falsifies history by implying that there was once a golden time of unproblematic, stable gender, when men were men, women were women, and everyone was happy with their social roles.

The word happy itself should set off alarm bells because honestly, society would not progress at all if everyone were happy. Unhappiness, discomfort, dissatisfaction are responsible for some of our most radical changes in society. It is only when people question the status quo, that we have the possibility of being better, of building something more beautiful and more inclusive. And therefore, any kind of attachment or satisfaction with the status quo is also detrimental to society at large.

One could argue therefore, that masculinity studies of feminist theory are radically important for society to continue to progress in a way that can ensure happiness for all and not merely people on top of the hierarchical set of chains of consequences.

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN

- Hegemonic masculinities
 - Hegemonic masculinity breaks the notion of a singular masculinity and brings out the hierarchies within the often generalized idea of masculinity. This desired, dominant form of masculinity operates by excluding other masculinities (gay, black, disabled, weak bodied masculinities) along with femininities.

The slide features a woman in a blue sleeveless top and dark pants standing in the bottom right corner. The text on the slide is partially underlined and crossed out with red lines. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.

In such a scenario, another set of concepts that might be useful have to do with the term “hegemonic masculinities.” Hegemonic masculinities were suggested by theorist of masculinity, such as Connell, to speak about relationships between men. And here is an important intervention, because remember much like early feminist theory which sought to raise consciousness and to look at experiences of women together and suggested that women share their stories with one another in order to let everyone know that they are not alone, that their travails not singular,

hegemonic masculinities, examines in a similar fashion the relationships between men to ask, does everybody experience the masculinity in the same fashion? In other words, is there a universal entity called masculinity? And as a result, hegemonic masculinity suggests that there is no singular masculinity and brings out the hierarchies within the often-generalized idea of masculinity. This desired, dominant form of masculinity operates, no surprises, by excluding other forms: gay, black, disabled, weak-bodied masculinities, along with femininities. Think of this radical move, now there is an effort and there is the capacity to make communion between different kinds of exclusions, to say that masculinity itself is not about hashtag all men. It is about a particular set of men that then claim this mantle and impose it on all kinds of excluded communities, men and women alike.

So, they exclude other sets of people that do not conform to this seemingly natural idea of masculinity, leading therefore to culturally bandied about terms like not man enough, which is a kind of terrifying phrase thrown at multiple men, who are told that they need to quote, unquote “man up” to bring out this possibility in them, and if they do not it is their personal failure. All of these alert us to the ways in which masculinity also depends on a set of discourses floating around in society. Bodies do not come into the world with pre-organized systems of knowledge about gender. These forms of knowledge have to be created in them and then the ways in which they been created have to be erased in order that one naturalizes these ideas into an idea of self. In other words, the work of ideology.

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THE NATURE OF DISCOURSE

- Masculinity and feminism are fantasies, but they invoke differently situated desires.
- Masculinity is a nostalgic formation, always missing, lost, or about to be lost, its ideal form located in a past that advances with each generation in order to recede just beyond its grasp.
- Feminism, in contrast, is a utopian discourse of an ideal future, never yet attained, whose myths celebrate alliances that manage conflicts within comprehensive metanarratives and narratives of comprehension.

The slide features a presenter on the right side. The text on the left is annotated with red circles and lines. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.

And therefore, in examining the nature of such discourses it is possible to conclude the following: Masculinity and feminism are fantasies, both of them are located in a fantasy world; but they invoke differently situated desires. In other words, let this not lead us down the dangerous paths to say that it is all the same. Masculinity also a fantasy, femininity also a fantasy and therefore our investments are of the same nature. Therefore, deconstructing and defeating them are a singular battle. They are not, because we need to be more specific as to the kinds of desires invoked by masculinity, as oppose to the desires of femininity and therefore feminism.

Here I will make a differentiation between femininity, which invokes a particular set of desires if you conform to it. And feminism which invokes completely desires for egalitarianism attach to differently gender bodies. Masculinity is a nostalgic formation, always missing, lost, or about to be lost. In the present formation of masculinity, we detect constant melancholia. Its ideal form located in a past that advances with each generation in order to recede just beyond its grasp. Think how poetic this seems, think why is it at those who rue the absence of men are always so wretched; who always feel like their world has collapsed. Because this nostalgic ideal formation is not available to anybody right now, leave alone the idea that it ever was available. Feminism, in contrast, is a utopian discourse of an ideal future, never yet attained, whose myths celebrate alliances. Feminism, in contrast, is a utopian discourse of an ideal future, never yet attained, whose myths celebrate alliances that manage conflicts within comprehensive metanarratives and

narratives of comprehension. I realized that this seems both ideal and a little pompous, but let us break it down.

Feminism is utopian discourse; this should be perfectly clear to you by now that feminism is always in pursuit of a world yet to come; of a world that we hope will come, but we do not know. Whose myths celebrate alliances, we have come to alliance-making over the course of the feminist movement; we are constantly looking for ways in which to delineate oppressions, marginalizations, disempowerment as not merely the lot of women but of multiple parts of the human race or the non-human race for that matter. And feminism manages conflicts within comprehensive metanarratives and narratives of comprehension.

Comprehensive metanarratives: metanarratives of how the world is organized through binaries of gender. Narratives of comprehension: how is it that we comprehend how women became women. And through these remember, masculinity is nostalgic, feminism is utopian, masculinity in the past; feminism is in the future. And in this scenario of these difficult binaries, where one is constantly looking for something that never was, and feminism is looking for something that has not yet been. Perhaps, it is really important to look at radical interventions in gender conforming in many ways neither to masculinity, nor femininity, but not discarding them entirely either and in fact, suggesting a politics of play, a politics of experimentation, and a politics of radical difference.

Let us therefore, look at the body of work called Queer theory. In many ways feminism and queer theory have greatly important points of meeting; but also, greatly important divergences. And these are important to remember, lest we think about queer theory as merely a continuity of the feminist project. It is not. In many ways queer theory can be apprehended as an interruption, a complete breakaway from business as usual to suggest completely different possibilities that feminist theory would agree within principle, but not may in practice, may not have the capacity to move away from the project of women for historical, contextual, and very, very pragmatic reasons.

Therefore, in this lecture I am not pitting one against the other. But I do want you to remember that queer theory by itself is a fantastic and fascinating body of work in its own right, and not as a derivative of feminist theory. So, let me start by giving you the kind of introduction to queer theory that I usually do in classes, where I speak about gender itself as a fascinating problematic construct.

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Please look at the image here. Look at the body on your screen and ask yourself the question, what is the first doubt that you would have about this body. Look at the clothes, look at the demeanor, look at the countenance, look at the physical markers and then write down for yourselves the top three questions you have.

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CASTER SEMENYA

- Caster Semenya OIB (born 7 January 1991) is a South African middle-distance runner and 2016 Olympic gold medalist.
- Following her victory at the 2009 World Championships, it was announced that she had been subjected to sex testing.[5] She was withdrawn from international competition until 6 July 2010 when the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) cleared her to return to competition.





The picture you saw on screen was of Caster Semenya, a South African middle-distance runner and 2016 Olympic gold medalist. An elite athlete, a much feted figure, but following her victory at the 2009 World Championships, it was announced that Semenya had been subjected to sex testing. Testing by sports authorities to examine, whether her victory was due to her own prowess

or to the fact that she was lying about being woman. She was withdrawn from international competition until, 6 July 2010, when the International Association of Athletics Federations cleared her to return to competition. If you are interested, please go look up the history of Caster Semenya. It is fascinating! And I do not mean fascinating necessarily in a positive sense. Her travails were horrendous! The ways in which she was questioned, whether she was truly a woman, allowed to compete in a women's championships, is something that is faced regularly by female athletes. Sex testing is exclusively almost always performed on female athletes and female sportspersons.

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Look at the figure on screen again, two different contexts within which Semenya is presented. In one, on the track exulting, having won; on the other you can see her in fashionable, or high fashion clothing meant to emphasize the idea of glamour. Which of the two would you be prepared to use to attest that Semenya is a woman? Keep that thought in mind, we will return to it as we go through a few more examples. And just to let you know, the picture where she is in fashionable clothing was part of a photo shoot in the background of these allegations that she was not a woman. It was a very strategic shoot!

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Speaking of fashion, look at the figure over here, and tell me if you are able to answer the standard questions of anybody in public space: man or woman? Usually in classrooms when I ask this question, the classroom is divided 50 percent. Some say man, some say woman and many are unable to commit. This is clearly somebody on a catwalk, in the world of high fashion and therefore difficult to ascertain whether one can accord manliness or womanliness.

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The slide features a light beige background with a dark wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner. The title 'ANDREJA PEJIĆ' is in large, bold, black letters. Below it, a bulleted list provides biographical details. A woman, presumably the speaker, stands in front of the slide, wearing a blue sleeveless top and a necklace.

ANDREJA PEJIĆ

- Andreja Pejić is a Bosnian-Australian model.
- In late 2013, Pejić underwent sex reassignment surgery.
- Before coming out as a trans woman in late 2013, Pejić was known as the first completely androgynous supermodel. Today, she is one of the most recognisable transgender models in the world.

This is Andreja Pejic or in a former set of identification Andre Pejic; a Bosnian-Australian model. In late 2013, Pejic underwent sex reassignment surgery and then began to identify as a woman. Before coming out as a trans woman in late 2013, Pejic was known as the first completely androgynous supermodel. Today, she is one of the most recognizable transgender models in the world. Look at Pejic's transformations in gender and forms of identification. Sex reassignment surgery to move from androgyny to trans womanhood. To take on the identification of a woman with the clear understanding that one is trans: one has transformed into a woman. And what something like this might mean for feminist theory, for masculinity studies is something that is dealt with in queer theory, but in a completely different fashion.

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And our last example over here, look again at the figure on stage. Two different photographs, one in daily life; one from a fashion shoot again. And there is reason why we keep returning to fashion as the stage for exploring these kinds of transformative possibilities or these kinds of radically inclusive possibilities, and I will go over them in a bit. But the figure on screen that you see is very important for our discussion because of the ways in which she herself discusses identity.

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CASEY LEGLER

- Casey Legler (born 26 April 1977) is a French-American writer, restaurateur, model, and former Olympic swimmer.
- In 2012, Legler became the first woman signed to Ford Models to exclusively model men's clothes.

The slide features a title 'CASEY LEGLER' and two bullet points. The first bullet point describes Casey Legler as a French-American writer, restaurateur, model, and former Olympic swimmer. The second bullet point states that in 2012, she became the first woman signed to Ford Models to exclusively model men's clothes. A red arrow points from the word 'exclusively' in the second bullet point to the word 'former' in the first bullet point. A woman is standing on a stage, speaking, with a microphone. She is wearing a blue sleeveless top and a necklace. An NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.

This is Casey Legler, born in 1977, French-American writer, restaurateur, model, and a former Olympic swimmer. In 2012, Legler became the first woman signed to Ford Models to exclusively

model men's clothes. Pay attention to what is happening over here, a female who models, and exclusively at that, men's clothes.


Not necessarily confirming to androgyny that Andre Pejic formally occupied before becoming Andreja Pejic. But here, you are looking at a particular kind of bodily presentation of someone who was a former Olympic swimmer and clearly has a physical capacity that invokes the idea of man in audiences. Sport and fashion are in many ways contrary arenas. In sport there is very clear investment in men as men and women as women. And the ways in which women's sports has always been second rung to men's sports is very well known.

The kinds of sexist trolling of female sports stars, the ways in which they are paid lesser than male sports stars, the fundamental questioning of gender should a female athlete perform in a fashion that is drastically different than how much is accorded to women, these are all familiar territories where gender can be questioned. Fashion on the other hand is clearly an arena for play. It is the possibility of shocking that allows fashion its profit possibilities. It is the possibility of producing awe, shock and awe if you will; that allows for fashion to be able to experiment with bodies.

And in such a scenario, you have room for models such as Andreja Pejic or Casey Legler, to also be able to play and to explore the boundaries of their own gender identities, even as in many cases, those like Casey Legler will say it is just not about gender, do not reduce it to gender, it is about producing possibilities for everyone in the world, to be able to inhabit.


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MALE MODELS: THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES – LIPINSKI, 2012, TIME



- Casey Legler is a woman working as a male model. She looks wonderfully comfortable shrugging into tailored suits and chomping on cigars. But assigning words to the experience isn't as easy. In an interview in her New York City studio, Legler steers around phrases like "gender identity" and "gender expression" in favor of having a conversation about freedom.

– <https://style.time.com/2012/11/20/male-models-the-female-of-the-species/>




MALE MODELS: THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES – LIPINSKI, 2012, TIME



- "I understand signifiers. We're social creatures and we have a physical language of communicating with each other," she says. "But it would be a really beautiful thing if we could all just wear what we wanted, without it meaning something."

– <https://style.time.com/2012/11/20/male-models-the-female-of-the-species/>



In an article titled, "Male Models, The Female of the Species," the author Lipinski writes, Casey Legler is a woman working as a male model. She looks wonderfully comfortable shrugging into tailored suits and chomping on cigars. But assigning words to the experience is not as easy.

In an interview in her New York City studio, Legler steers around phrases like "gender identity" and "gender expression" in favour of having a conversation about freedom. Look at the wording of this article; she looks comfortable, shrugging into tailored suits, chomping on cigars. Almost suggesting in many in ways a performative experience; and perhaps a number of women and some men will talk about this, about being clothed differently, about moving your body in different

ways. Dancers will speak about this, actors will speak about this, about having the temporary possibility of freedom, of escaping the labels that one has been assigned in terms of gender and comportment and becoming something else. Wearing men's clothes, feeling like one is free in public to behave like a man; looking at the multiple ways in which one can play with both fashion and with body almost like a performance.

But in the interview Legler does not speak about gender identity, gender expression; instead she speaks precisely about this kind of freedom. And this is an experience that I always ask students to reflect upon which is that, at any point of time have you woken up in the morning in a slightly dazed state, not knowing exactly who you are. Are you sure that your gender identity is intrinsic that it is attached to you, that you can only always behave in that fashion and that no other possibility is available to you.

What happens when you wear a different set of clothes? What happens for example, if you were to wear clothes of the opposite gender? And this has been available to women for a while now: wearing pants at one particular time used to be revolutionary, being able to have short hair, being able to pass in public space as not a womanly woman in order to escape attention.

All of these strategies have been available to woman, sometimes for the wrong reasons and sometimes for the purpose of freedom. Much less so for men and this is where masculinity study is important. But in queer theory, we are asking about the range of freedom available to all bodies.

And Legler says, "I understand signifiers. We are social creatures; we have a physical language of communicating with each other." Legler is remarkably intelligent and she is saying that, I know what you mean by signifiers, I know that people signify gender in multiple ways and my goal is not to disavow all of the above. In other words, shrugging into tailored suits, chomping on cigars; there was a particular time in fashion, where women in the corporate world liked wearing suits with padded shoulders.

It gave them the sense of strength, it allowed them to signify strength through their fashion. Casey says, I understand signifiers, we are social creatures, we communicate; but it would be a really beautiful thing, if we could all just wear what we wanted, without it meaning something.

I am not sure how utopian this fervent appeal is. But you do see it in popular figures around you; those who are willing to play with fashion. And an important sort of consideration is, look around you, look at the ways in which fashion or high fashion is built upon this idea of play.

And one should not question it too much after appoint because it will fall apart. Fashion depends upon making profits, depends on selling things to people, is based on high turnovers, so that it can keep selling things to a constantly desiring population. But we'll leave that aside for now; let us talk a little bit about figures that we see in popular culture having the willingness to play, having the willingness to endorse and embody, androgyny or the opposite sex from what they have been identified with in usual real life.

Think about donning each of these as constant performances, hinting at the fact that gender the way in which we understand it through signification is very much a construct. And if you want examples, think Ranveer Singh, look at the ways in which he is quote, unquote “crazily attired.” The ways in which he experiments with hair, body, clothing, so on and so forth.

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MALE MODELS: THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES – LIPINSKI, 2012, TIME

- Androgyny has long been celebrated in the fashion world. Women have modeled as men, and men have modeled as women. Andrej Pejic, a young male model from Bosnia, made a splash in recent years with his feminine beauty and knack for wearing women's clothes. ("Andrej is gorgeous" Legler says. "In many ways, I come ushered in by that.") But it's still rare — if not unheard of — for a woman to sign a contract to model men's clothing exclusively.

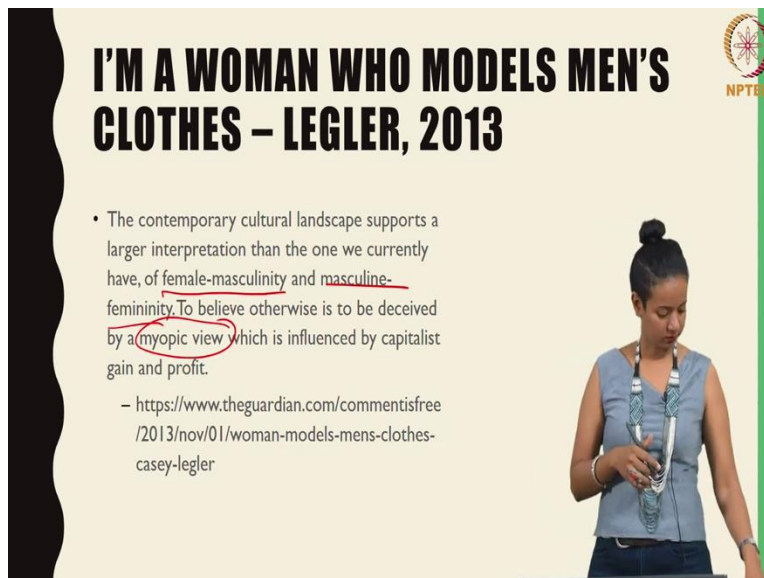
— <https://style.time.com/2012/11/20/male-models-the-female-of-the-species/>

The interview continues, “Androgyny has long been celebrated in the fashion world.” And in many ways Casey Legler speaking also as to building on the legacy of Andre Pejic. She says, “Andrej is gorgeous, in many ways, I come ushered in by that. Women have modeled as men, and men have modeled as women. Andrej Pejic, a young male model from Bosnia, made a splash in recent years with his feminine beauty and knack for wearing women's clothes.” The word knack is interesting

because it means that, it is a talent that you have a capacity; that you have learned how to wear them well. And you will see this in people all around you, that there are some who so good at carrying of certain things. The phrase carrying of; carrying of means that you are able to wear certain things and feel supremely comfortable wearing them. You think you belong in it and that is a learned skill; it does not necessarily come naturally.

“But it is still rare, if not unheard of, for a woman to sign a contract to model men's clothing exclusively.” Here you can see hints of the hierarchy still existing. How is it that a woman is modeling men's clothes? A man is able to embody femininity and is able to wear women's clothes. But how is it that a woman is exclusively modeling men's clothes? is not going back and forth?

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I'M A WOMAN WHO MODELS MEN'S CLOTHES – LEGLER, 2013

• The contemporary cultural landscape supports a larger interpretation than the one we currently have, of female-masculinity and masculine-femininity. To believe otherwise is to be deceived by a myopic view which is influenced by capitalist gain and profit.

– <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/01/woman-models-mens-clothes-casey-legler>

NPTCL

The slide features a photograph of a woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a light blue sleeveless top and dark pants, looking down at a small object in her hands. The background is a solid light beige color. The title is in large, bold, black capital letters. The quote is in a smaller black font, with the words 'myopic view' circled in red. The URL is in a smaller black font. The NPTCL logo is in the top right corner.

Legler herself in the same article also has a commentary on masculinity, femininity, and gender. She says, the contemporary cultural landscape supports a larger interpretation than the one we currently have, of female-masculinity and masculine-femininity. To believe otherwise is to be deceived by a myopic view which is influenced by capitalist gain and profit.” And for those who argue that this is a western thing, that all of these kinds of interpretations are by those who are part of the first world, and can afford such kinds of indulgences, remember, that most cultural landscapes around the world have a wide variety of female-masculinity and masculine femininity. From aravanis and hijras to the castrate, there are multiple ways in which history will testify to the fact of these fluidities; that have then been subsumed by current capitalist discourse.

A myopic view in many ways which is, about this organization by binary categories for the purpose of bureaucratic ease in many ways; that only aids myopia in Legler words and a lack of intelligence in apprehending the world around us.

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I'M A WOMAN WHO MODELS MEN'S CLOTHES – LEGLER, 2013

• “And why should you care about this? Because we have in our societies children and teenagers and we are responsible for their wellbeing. This is on us. And why do I specifically care about this? Why am I bothering to write this? Because I'm gay. I'm butch. I'm a woman. I'm queer. I'm 36. I'm 6ft 2in. And caring for otherness matters to me.”

– <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/01/woman-models-mens-clothes-casey-legler>

The slide features a photograph of Casey Legler, a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a blue sleeveless top and a necklace. She is looking down at her hands. The slide has a black wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right. An NPTEL logo is in the top right corner.

And lastly, Legler brings her point home by saying, “why should you care about this?” This is not esoteric; this is not something outside of your realm of experience. “Because we have in our societies children and teenagers and we are responsible for their wellbeing. This is on us. And why do I specifically care about this?” And she is making a heartfelt plea for the existence of difference. For not subsuming difference in our children, and in our teenagers in the name of some kind of abstract understanding of gender and status quo. She says, “why do I specifically care about this? Why am I bothering to write this? Because I am gay. I am butch. I am a woman. I am queer. I am 36. I am 6 feet 2 inches and caring for otherness matters to me.” In many ways she is bringing together so beautifully and so succinctly the project of all kinds of social theory. Social theory is invested in constantly, relentlessly making room for otherness, and especially feminist theory, especially queer theory in asking the question of what are the ways in which otherness produces for a certain power relations, where we are constantly faced with the specter of inequality. And here, look at the categories that she is laying out for us as a list: gay, butch, woman, queer, 36, 6 ft 2 inches. Put any of those together and then you will see, what are the ways in which the world might make life difficult for anyone insisting on their right to occupy all of those categories. And what are the ways in which children and teenagers are taught to hide parts of themselves, in order

to conform to relentless sets of binaries in the world. In a very simple example would be those who are left handed; and multiple horror stories of how they were forcibly turned into right handed people, because the world does not like the idea of multiply handed people.

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I'M A WOMAN WHO MODELS MEN'S CLOTHES – LEGLER, 2013

• This is about making space, making room and making things better. ...It offers a false sense of privilege and ignorance to those who "fit" the norm (or trend) while potentially destroying those who don't and ignoring those who are able to survive outside of it.

– <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/01/woman-models-mens-clothes-casey-legler>

NPTL

The slide features a photograph of Casey Legler, a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light blue sleeveless top and a necklace, looking down at a small object in her hands. The slide has a black wavy border on the left and a green vertical bar on the right.


And in continuity this is the important part of this interview. “This is about making space, making room, and making things better... It offers a false sense of privilege and ignorance to those who "fit" the norm or trend; while potentially destroying those who do not and ignoring those who are able to survive outside of it.”

Look at how beautifully she is drawn the terrain for us. A false sense of privilege and ignorance to those who fit the norm or trend. Therefore, you have the callousness of large numbers of people who think it is in their interest to be able to argue the naturalization of certain things. Men are men, women are women, is most often argued by men or by women who conform to femininity and want to be able to reap the rewards of adhering to the status quo. Potentially destroying those who do not and the tales of this rampant, if only we managed to look around us, Which is that those who do not conform, the disabled, those who are not hetero-sexual, those who are not sizist in size zero fashion. Ableist logic, agist logic, sexist logic is reproduced and thereby potentially destroys those who do not fit in those narrow parameters. And ignoring those who are able to survive outside of it. There are survivor stories those who refused to conform to this logic and those who are not destroyed by the system, mainly through solidarity, community and their own ingenuity, and it is

upon us to be able to highlight this possibility in order that we do not further, this false sense of privilege and ignorance which is the prerogative of the normal or the norm.


And therefore, in queer theory, we are interested in disturbing these categories and constant provocations, but also not merely a whataboutery. Instead, it also consists of demonstrations through embodied work by those who are able to survive outside of it, often at considerable risk to themselves.

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BEING BORN INTO A SEX

- In 1933, Sigmund Freud acknowledged a significant human desire to know with certainty what sex a person is: 'when you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is "male or female?" and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty' (1933: 113).



In 1933, Sigmund Freud acknowledged a significant human desire to know with certainty what sex a person is. When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is "male or female?" And I bet that is the first distinction you made, when I showed you these pictures on screen. You are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty. And queer theory wants to disturb that certainty through deconstruction of the very edifice, we call sex / gender.